2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

PART II

CHAPTER SIX

Security, Colony and Protectorate

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THE first duty of all Governors and Administrators is to maintain security in the area under their authority, and in order to enable them to carry out this primary function they are provided with security forces which may take the form of police, armed or unarmed, and troops, regular or irregular, and even aircraft. In Aden when I became Governor there were two separate security problems, the first of which was the maintenance of law and order in the Colony itself, and the second was the maintenance of security in the more settled areas of the Protectorate, while at the same time increasing the sphere in which our security measures were effective until the whole of the Protectorate territory had achieved a degree of security which would enable development both political and economic to take place.

In the Colony there were available to me, as Governor, Civil Police in adequate numbers, a small detachment of Armed Police, and under the command of the Air Officer Commanding, a reserve of British troops in the form of a detachment of the Royal Air Force Regiment. In addition, there were also the Aden Protectorate Levies for use during a period of disturbance to guard key points, in particular in the neighbourhood of the Khormaksar military installations.

In the Protectorate there were various forces and formations available and at my own and the Rulers' disposal; in addition there were aircraft of the Royal Air Force operating from the Colony and also from landing grounds in the Protectorate. Later I will describe the employment of the Protectorate

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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security forces in further detail, but for the moment I want to confine my attention to security in the Colony.

The Colony, to all outward appearances, and they can be very deceptive, always seemed to be one of the most peaceful places on earth where nothing was ever likely to happen, but in fact it only required a minor incident at the wrong time to cause really serious trouble and to do so not within a matter of days, but almost of minutes. The reason, of course, is not far to seek; it is that there are in the Colony three races who have no special love for each other. The Jews are disliked and despised by the Arabs whom they fear, while the Arabs in their turn dislike the Somalis who are, at the best of times, a truculent lot. Therefore, we were always liable to have trouble between the Arabs and the Jews which might well spread to the Hindu community, or between the Somalis and the Arabs, or between all three, and in no time, much to the surprise very often of successive Air Officers Commanding, the summer skies had clouded over and we were having a devil of a storm, which with firm measures would pass as quickly as it began. A stranger would be astonished to learn on his arrival in tranquil Aden that inter-racial disturbances had resulted in one or two deaths only two or three days before.

I do not want to give the impression that Aden is particularly prone to disorder, and that civil disturbances are the rule rather than the exception because this would be a false picture. What I mean is that, on the rare occasions when there is trouble, it comes with incredible swiftness, due to the latent racial animosities that are always present.

To give an instance of my first experience of the speed of events when inter-racial trouble started in the Colony, I must go back to 1931, when there occurred the first anti-Jewish riot. At that time there were some 6,000 Jews living in Aden, most of them in Crater in their own quarter close by the Boys' Secondary School. Some of them were very wealthy and most of them were in business either as shopkeepers or merchants or petty traders, and generally speaking, they kept very much to themselves, were self-effacing and their contacts with the Arabs were reasonably good. From time to time,

701 question of sound and inspired leadership and the discipline which flows from such leadership.

626 Security in the Protectorate was a very much wider problem than in the Colony and there were more diverse forces at my disposal to ensure a reasonable degree of protection and to punish those who wilfully created disturbances. Prior to 1937 no-one had paid very much attention to the Protectorate, and His Majesty's Government certainly had not attempted to honour their obligations. I doubt if they were really fully aware of what those obligations were to the people of this great territory. Beyond ensuring, in so far as was possible, that the trade routes remained open so that the trade of the Colony was not impaired by the wild and woolly ruffians in the hills behind, very little was done, and what was done was generally by the old-fashioned method of placating unruly and tiresome individuals with rifles and ammunition and money.

626 631 After 1937 there was a profound change in policy and the emphasis was then on reducing the number of lethal weapons in private possession and building up the authority of the Treaty Chiefs by providing them with the means to maintain security in their own States. His Majesty's Government had come to a better understanding of their obligations and realised that the first essential to any form of progress must be security. The Rulers were encouraged, therefore, to form their own armed police forces, and they received assistance in arming, clothing and paying for these forces.

625 701 By the time I became Governor there had come into being in each State a body of men who were known as Tribal Guards and who were at the Ruler's disposal to maintain his authority and for use in any sudden security emergency. Starting as a completely untrained force they had gradually been brought up to a standard of efficiency and effectiveness which was a credit to the instructors who had been made available from the [714] Government Guards. On ceremonial occasions they were very smart indeed, dressed in khaki shirts and khaki kilts with red cloth head-dresses, but in an emergency they left these trappings at home and there was nothing outwardly to distinguish

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1958 MM1 Aden MM1

inexhaustible energy had reduced me to a physical and nervous wreck—and I was the younger man.

Near Mukalla to the east beyond the landing ground at Riyan is the collegiate town of Ghil-Ba-Wazir, so called by me because it seemed to consist of nothing but schools surrounded by a few fields of Hammumi tobacco which normally was exported to Egypt via Aden. Primary schools and a large State Intermediate School with a considerable boarding establishment catered for the youth of Mukalla and the more advanced pupils from all over the State. The masters, who were local men or Sudanese on contract, always left me with an impression of keenness, competence and contentment. From Ghil-Ba-Wazir the more promising pupils went on to Aden College or the Technical Institute in Aden, or to a Secondary School in the Sudan, depending on the inclination of the parents or of the Mukalla Government if they were financing the boys' further education.

Up in the vast open spaces of the northern limits of the State, survey parties of Petroleum Concessions Ltd. moved farther and farther into territory which was practically unknown to Europeans, on their ceaseless quest for oil, spurred on by recent increases in the cost of their prospecting licence. As these parties pushed their way northwards so did similar parties from the Arabian-American Oil Company at Dhahran on the Persian Gulf in Saudi Arabia move steadily southward with their portable drilling rigs drawn by great tractors and their air-conditioned living caravans, across the great yellow sand dunes of the Rub-al-Khali.

The frontier became of considerable importance, much more so than it had ever been before and we found it advisable to exercise a greater degree of control over our tribes than had been necessary or desirable in the past. The Sultan was concerned about the peace of these northern marches, and, fearing an act of aggression, felt that steps should be taken to safeguard the well at Thamud, the only available water for many miles around. This was done by building a fort, constructing a landing strip and flying in a garrison of soldiers of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion. Later, similar measures were taken over to

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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the east at Sanau where the only well was between Thamud and the Aden-Muscat frontier. These two places lie to the south of the great sand dunes of the Rub'-al-Khali amidst country more desolate than I have ever seen in any part of the world, and in my time I have flown over, driven over or walked and ridden over some pretty uninviting country.

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I went to Thamud for the first time in 1953, before the fort had been built, to inspect the detachment of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion who were living in holes scraped out of the hard sand and furnished with a canvas roof as some protection against the fierce heat of the sun. It was not easy to pick up the well from the air in that featureless country and it reflects great credit on the navigator and the pilot of the 'plane that they found the landing strip at the first attempt. We landed a mile or so from the well, and the only signs of life as we drove to the well were the store-cum-hospital tent, a modest affair of some 160 lbs., which normally would sleep a dozen men, and the two much smaller tents of the Military Assistant to the Resident Adviser and the Commandant of the Legion who had joined the detachment temporarily, the former a Scot from the Highlands and the latter a stout and jovial Arab on secondment from the Arab Legion in Trans-Jordan.

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A guard was mounted, which I inspected, and I do not recall ever having seen a better turned-out or smarter body of men anywhere. These men, who are recruited from the bedouin tribes, are responsible among other things for guarding the long Aden-Saudi Arabian frontier, and they do their work very well. They work under the direct control of their own Arab officers who command the Frontier Posts and who are responsible for the motor patrols which operate between the Posts. These motor patrols are equipped with Land-Rovers and carry portable wireless sets which enable them to keep in touch with their parent Post. The Military Assistant is stationed hundreds of miles away in Mukalla where the Commandant also has his headquarters, so that these Arab officers and their men are normally very much on their own and quickly learn to use their own initiative in dealing with sudden emergencies and solving the various problems which are the normal lot of

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1 •
Yemen MM1

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and this manifestation of Arab unity and progress was certainly not unwelcome to the public. Some there were who felt that the unusual union would not stand the test of time, but the anti-Communist aspect of the move made a general appeal. The Arab Muslim has a profound dislike of Communism, a creed, if it can be so described, fundamentally opposed to the teaching of Islam.

In the Protectorate the new Republic was viewed with little enthusiasm by the Rulers of the Western section of the Protectorate who were alive to the possibility of the Yemen becoming a partner in the union in spite of her monarchial system of government. They knew full well that the Imam's sole object in joining would be to secure Egyptian assistance in his almost open war against the Protectorate. The Crown Prince of the Yemen might have other and possibly more high-minded motives in wooing the Egyptians, but not so his father whose thoughts were concentrated on the furtherance of his claims to the Protectorate.

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The fears of the Rulers were fully justified. No sooner had the Yemen, already strengthened with arms from behind the Iron Curtain, joined the United Arab Republic than the disturbances on the Aden-Yemen frontier were intensified and Communist arms and Egyptian and Russian instructors aggravated an already dangerous situation.

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There is no doubt that the possession of automatic weapons and artillery by the Yemen has put a much more serious aspect on the acts of aggression which the Government of that country continues to initiate against the Protectorate, and the Protectorate Rulers most closely affected have been outspoken in their condemnation of the Yemen and in their demand that Her Majesty's Government fulfil her treaty pledges and take immediate action to prevent further aggression. Theirs is a very natural reaction, and it would seem that at long last a stronger line is to be taken with the Yemen. In May of this year the Royal Air Force carried out a successful attack on Yemen gun positions near the town of Qataba in the Yemen. These guns had been shelling British forces well within Protectorate limits in the Dhala Amirate. Nothing could have

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